



News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Federal Agencies Announce Modified Road Closures To Protect Sonoran Pronghorn

In order to continue to protect the endangered Sonoran pronghorn during fawning season, seasonal road closures will again take effect on public lands near Ajo: Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Bureau of Land Management, Barry M. Goldwater Range and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. Closures are a month later than in previous years, beginning on **April 15, 2009**.

The Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Team determined closures could be delayed this year due to above average habitat conditions on the central and western portions of the pronghorn range. Visitor use will not adversely impact pronghorn during this critical period. Closure times for future years will be based upon rainfall and forage conditions affecting Sonoran pronghorn. Please contact individual agencies for further information regarding closures.

Only one Sonoran Pronghorn population exists in the United States. An estimated 85% of the U.S. population died during a severe drought in 2001 and 2002, and the remaining U.S. population is currently estimated at 68 animals.

North America's fastest land animal, the Sonoran Pronghorn is related to four other subspecies of Pronghorn in western North America. The Sonoran Pronghorn was listed as "endangered" in 1967 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act. Endangered species status means that a plant or animal is "...in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range." The three subspecies that occur in Mexico are protected under Mexican law.

The United States and Mexico are currently engaged in an international effort to capture and breed the Sonoran Pronghorn for reintroduction into suitable habitats. Capture-breed-transplant actions are considered essential to the survival of the Sonoran pronghorn because the Sonoran pronghorn (commonly referred to as 'antelope') is now one of the most endangered mammals in the world

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.southwest.fws.gov.